

Frequently Asked Questions #4 – Adult PS Transfer from DFCS TO DAS June 7, 2004

Important Notice

A 2-day APS Transition meeting is planned for June 24-25, 2004 in Macon, GA for APS staff transferring to DAS and accepting APS positions with DAS effective 7/1/04. Information covered during the 2 days will be critical to the transfer of APS to DAS and will help to ensure that everyone gains a clear understanding of the changes, expectations and new procedures associated with the transfer. During this meeting APS Teams, comprised of a supervisor and caseworkers, will establish geographical caseload boundaries, determine whether some caseworkers on the team will specialize in investigations, develop initial plans for back-up coverage when caseworker are out due to illness, vacations or unfilled vacancies, begin scheduling supervisory conferences and discuss procedures for case conferences. Please note these dates and plan to attend this meeting. More details will follow soon.

Questions and Answers

1. I have not seen anything about any type of clerical support positions going to the DOA. Do you know if people will be needed for that type of work? IF so, I may be interested in changing over. Please let me know if staff will be needed.

When will the competitive positions be advertised?

Answer: Our regional APS service delivery plan includes a limited number of clerical support staff across the state's 12 regions. These positions will be filled on a competitive basis and posted on the www.dhrjobs.com website in coming weeks. All who are interested in these positions should check the website periodically. At the DHR jobs website click at the bottom of the page "APS transition to DAS". We encourage all who are qualified and interested to apply for the positions. As of today, the positions that have been posted are: Aging Services Program Administrator, Aging Services Coordinator, and Operations Analysis Manager.

2. What is the time frame when you will notify family service workers who work only with APS when they can expect to know whether or not they have a job with DAS? Will you be sending them letters at their homes, or at the office? If a worker wants to stay working with DAS only, will they have that option?

Once the transition is made, will DFCS have FSWs as well as DAS?

Answer: The APS Transfer Preference Letters were mailed last week to the home addresses of Family Service Workers (FSW) identified as potential lateral transferees based on caseload surveys that identified those workers who provided services to APS clients. Most should have received their letter by now. Upon receiving affirmative preference responses, we will analyze replies for each of the 12 geographical regions and select those to transfer. Then we will mail an official offer letter (sent to home address) and the FSWs will have an opportunity to indicate whether they accept or refuse the offer to transfer. There are a limited number of FSW positions that will transfer with APS to DAS. The FSWs who do not transfer will be assigned work responsibilities by DFCS. We anticipate that this process will be completed within the next 2 weeks.

3. I was wondering if there were any additional openings that have not been filled yet. I know a few other workers who might be interested in these positions if there are any.

Will a CPS worker with Prior background in APS be considered for transfer to DAS for an APS position? Also, with this transition will there be more APS positions then what was formally allotted for DFCS?

I am currently employed as SSCM in an ongoing CPS unit for a year. I have prior experience as the sole APS SSCM for a smaller county, in which I did ongoing and investigations. How can I be considered for a transfer from CPS back to APS? Will there be more positions? Is it possible to obtain a transfer preference form, in case a position comes up.

When will APS positions be advertised for workers that are not presently in APS, but have experience in that area and would like to transfer over to DAS as opposed to being certified in the Office of child protection?

On the New (unclassified) positions that will be established & competitively filled. Will a degree be required or will it be the competitiveness & your ability to do the job?

I have an APS cm who began working in August 2003 and went to training. She was beginning to get a caseload (28) when she was moved to CPS on-going in January. Our county has enough cases for her to go with APS (2 cm got letters and are going).

I also supervise but would like to go with APS. When will we be able to apply?

Is there going to be opportunities for consultant, trainers, etc.?

Answer: To date we have completed the transfer selection process for APS case managers and supervisors. There are some position vacancies for APS supervisors and a few case managers that remain to be filled as part of the APS transfer to DAS. These positions and any additional APS positions that become available during upcoming months will be advertised and filled on a competitive basis. Interested staff are encouraged to apply for the positions. The basic and preferred qualifications are included in all posted job announcements. Experience in the APS program will be an advantage in the selection process. In addition, DAS will be hiring state office staff and regional managers. Please check the www.dhrjobs.com website for more information. At the DHR jobs web site click at the bottom of the page APS transition to DAS. We encourage all who are qualified and interested to apply for the positions.

4. What about my FLSA? Will this transfer over to DOA or will DFCS have to pay this time to me?

What about FLSA time that has been accrued. Will this transfer over to DAS or will DFCS have to pay this time / money to APS staff prior to their transfer.

Answer: Per DHR Personnel Policy #1001, FLSA, time will not transfer between DHR organizational units. It will be the responsibility of DFCS to pay the transferring employees for any accrued FLSA compensatory time.

5. Do we know where the regional cluster offices will be?

Answer: Instead of 'regional' or 'cluster', we are going to use the word 'District'. The location of the District Managers' offices is yet to be determined and will depend on the current location of the individuals selected for these 5 positions. During the next 12 months, APS staff will remain in DFCS offices until alternative work sites are determined and available.

6. Our county has one fulltime APS worker. If that person is offered a transfer, but declines, what happens? According to staff allocation, there would not be a position to move this person to.

Answer: DFCS will make all personnel decisions regarding employees who choose not to transfer. However, if you received the formal notice offering you the transfer, it means that your position will be transferred to the Division of Aging Services.

7. If I work in one county, how far will I be expected to travel?

Answer: The Adult Protective Services program under DAS is an area-based service delivery model and each of the 12 local area teams (comprised of supervisor and case workers) will determine the county or counties each worker will cover. Each case manager's travel requirements will depend on the coverage area and caseload composition. There is a need to keep travel costs to a minimum while still providing needed APS coverage.

8. I work a very flexible schedule (of usually more than 40 hours per week). Will I still have the opportunity to continue with this flexible schedule under the DAS or will I be required to work within a rigid time frame?

I work a flex schedule. I work 9 hour days for 5 days then the following week I work 9 hour days for 4 days and am able to take off one day every other week. Will I still be able to do this?

Can I keep my flex hours?

Answer: It is DAS policy that all eligible employees be offered the opportunity to participate in an approved Flexible Work Hours and Alternative Work Days plan provided that work responsibilities are met. DAS has policy and procedures on this and specifics will be handled and approved in conjunction with supervisors, managers and staff after the July 1st transfer.

9. In my county an APS intake is screen in the same manner as CPS. Also, past CPS and eligibility files are a good resource for background information and finding significant persons in the APS client's life. Once we are no longer housed with DFCS, how will we go about getting this information?

Will I still have the same access to IDS or will that change too? What about those cases which are both APS and CPS/PLC? How will those cases be handled? If we are no longer under DFCS, does that mean that the APS case manager can be representative payee on a FS case for those clients who are house bound or will we be barred from that role as we currently are?

Answer: These are all good questions and are being studied by the Transition Team. During the next 12 months some APS will have access to IDS and other screening programs and options will be explored for the future. The DAS Aging Information Management System (AIMS) will be used to build a database on APS also. During the upcoming months APS staff in DAS and DFCS staff will continue to work together on cases that cross programs. Details on specific steps and procedures will be developed and shared with all.

APS case managers should never be appointed as Representative Payee. Though staff are capable of taking on this responsibility, it presents a conflict of interest and poses a potential risk to individual staff. Based on a Memorandum of Understanding between DAS and DFCS, the financial aspects of Rep Payee cases will continue to be handled by DFCS, and case management activities will be handled by APS staff during FY'05. In the mean time, DAS will explore other alternatives and options for the Payeeship cases.

10. I am a services generalist transferring to APS. In the county I work in I was told that I would have to be upgraded to a case manager before I could help with "on call", will that be the case with APS? Because from what I understand, all transferred workers are expected to help with "on call" and according to my superiors

policy wouldn't allow me to be "on call" here for CPS and APS, (which was fine with me) but now will the policy change?

And where will out tear sheets come from if we are working multi-county?

Answer: Staff doing APS under DAS will have some "on call" responsibilities, but the requirements will not be the same as related to CPS under DFCS. APS has traditionally had very limited after hours capabilities for service intervention related to placements and/or emergency interventions. Primarily these situations are handled by emergency medical services and law enforcement. APS Teams will develop "on call" expectations and procedures. All APS staff will be involved in the procedures.

The Transition Team is working on the tear sheet issue and a process will be developed and shared with staff by APS supervisors and managers.

11. How can the reporters in (my) County or other urban communities voice their concerns regarding Centralized Intake? I would like a contact number for the reporters in my community to voice their concerns about the new Intake process as I have been trying to prepare them for the upcoming transition.

Answer: The Centralized APS Intake Unit will have a supervisor and that person will be the contact for concerns by reporters once the transfer occurs. The need to move to centralized APS intake and decision to do so in Georgia was based on several factors. The majority of APS programs across the country have moved to centralized intake (800 numbers for receiving reports) to improve acceptance of appropriate reports to APS, ensure more standardization and enable more complete data collection. One challenge for DAS, APS, DFCS and DHR will be to educate both mandated reporters and the general public on how to report abuse, neglect or exploitation of disabled adults and elder persons, whether they live in long-term care facilities or in the community. Educational materials and cross-training efforts will be developed and distributed to help meet this challenge.

12. I anticipate losing about 3 staff to DAS as transfers since they are already doing APS. Will they transfer their position # or will new position #s be established in DAS? I ask this because I am working on staff allocation. If they take their position #s with them, I need to establish position numbers in CPS to cover the loss. If they vacate their position #s I will simply fill the vacancies with CPS staff. Budgets must be completed before July 1 and this is a critical piece of information that is missing.

Answer: All positions transferred to DAS will come with their same position numbers.

13. I work in a larger county. The APS unit that I am in is comprised of 5 case managers and 1 supervisor. Will my unit be able to stay together or will we all have to relocate to other APS offices in this region?

Will we be able to work out of the same office or will we have to relocate to a DFCS in another county?

Answer: The plan is that DFCS staff members who transfer to DAS will remain in their current DFCS offices for FY'05 based on a MOU. Once all APS staff are identified and Teams (supervisor and group of workers) formed there may be some requests or needs to make changes. At this point we anticipate that most work locations will remain the same for the next year. Once the APS program is stabilized after the transfer, we may need to shift some employees based on recommendations from local teams and regional managers. The need for some changes may occur as the result of team composition and/or location of its members, client caseloads, coverage needs and the need for efficient use of travel

time and associated costs.

14. Where will the APS closed files be housed after July 1?

Where are the case records kept?

Answer: For the time being closed APS files will remain in the DFCS offices where they are now. Once the APS Transfer to DAS stabilizes, we will develop procedures for accessing the closed files and determining where they will be ultimately housed in the future.

APS case records currently open and new cases after July 1, 2004 will be kept by the case worker assigned to the case in a place designated by their DFCS office. This may require some physical movement of active case record files to DAS/APS staff. Once APS supervisors and teams are in place and assignments made, there will be procedures issued for getting the records to appropriate staff.

15. At what point in time will the CPS cases be taken away from us?

When will APS workers be able to pull away from CPS duties?

Will the APS workers have to be on CPS call during the month of June?

What will we need to do if we are on call and get CPS reports and it's time for us to transfer? Meaning right in the middle of an investigation?

Answer: The Transition Team is developing a transfer process with specific steps/procedures and this will be forthcoming soon. DFCS staff transferred to DAS/APS will need to transfer CPS/PLC cases to staff that remain with DFCS. There will be multi-program DFCS staff that will need to transfer their APS cases to DAS/APS staff as well. DAS and DFCS will need to continue working together to ensure that all clients' cases are transferred in a manner that is best for the client, ensures safety and meets needs.

For APS staff involved with a CPS situation on July 1st, our expectation is that DFCS and DAS staff will follow good casework practices and cooperate professionally to ensure the case is handled in the best interest of the children. As soon as possible the case should be transferred to a CPS worker. Likewise, if DFCS staff members are involved with an APS case, the same should occur for adult clients and the case transferred to an APS worker as soon as possible.

During the month of June, APS workers will continue getting work assignments from DFCS supervisors and this could include "CPS call". Effective July 1st, staff designated as transferred to DAS will be receiving case assignments and work responsibilities by DAS/APS supervisors. DFCS will be directing APS matters to DAS/APS staff.

June is a good time for staff impacted by the transfer to begin the process of transferring CPS and APS cases, if possible. Case consultations and joint visits are encouraged in preparation for the changes. More specific steps and procedures will be issued in coming weeks.

16. From Julie York, LMSW; DFCS -Education and Research Section: I want to clarify the response I sent you about the IV-E grant regarding the transition of some staff from DFCS to DAS. The original response I sent you was a little confusing; some staff have been calling for clarification. Here is a revised response that is more

clear:

"The Title IV-E Child Welfare Grant requires that staff participating on the grant fulfill their work obligation in a child welfare position upon graduation. Staff who are affected by the change from part CPS/APS caseloads to full APS caseloads in the Division of Aging can remain on the grant.

UPON GRADUATION, staff need to make arrangements to: 1. Repay their grant or 2. Transfer to an Office of Child Protection position.

Staff can remain on the grant, but upon graduation would need to seek a position in DFCS in the Office of Child Protection. "

Answer: Thanks Julie for the clarification.

17. Many of our referrals about elders do not have clearly defined neglect. In the past, a telephone call was made, then I & R. I have found that most elders cannot follow through without support-and often there are other issues in the home, that are not in the report. How are these referrals to be handled by intake after the transition? I am concerned that those elders who need the most help will be I & Red.

Answer: Centralized APS Intake will be manned by experienced and trained APS staff that will have skills for determining if the report meets APS criteria and/or referring the caller to another appropriate resource. Probing interviews and collateral calls will be used to solicit facts and information. In addition, APS will be working with its partners in the Aging Network and Mental Health/DD/AD, ORS and others to strengthen relationships and responses to situations that come to the attention of APS Intake. Traditionally the APS program has operated on the premise that if there is a doubt about the real facts, we accept and investigate, to ensure a client does not "slip through the cracks".

18. If we are able to work out of the same office how will the payee cases be done? Does the DFCS in the county where the client live handle the paperwork and issue the checks or does my county handle them?

Answer: The Representative Payeeship cases pose a challenge to us all in the APS Transfer. DFCS and DAS have agreed that DFCS staff will continue to handle the financial money management, maintain the restricted fund accounts and issue checks through FY'05 while the DAS/APS staff will continue to handle the case management activities for APS Payeeship cases.

Since the benefits check(s) comes to the current DFCS office for the client ("XX County DFCS Payee for John Doe"), that should remain the same unless a change is made through the Social Security Administration. The APS case manager assigned John Doe's APS case (after July 1st) will coordinate paperwork with the entity that is handling the money management in the county where the restricted fund account is managed.

Adult Protective Services Transition Team

June 7, 2004